Gaza Under Siege: War Crimes and Violations in Light of International Law

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Abstract:

This article examines the situation in Gaza through the lens of international humanitarian law and asks whether the reported conduct amounts to war crimes under international standards. It focuses on the deliberate killing of civilians, indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks on civilian infrastructure, obstruction of humanitarian aid, and arbitrary arrests and torture during the conflict. Drawing on reports from the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the International Criminal Court's monitoring of related cases, the article argues that the pattern of violence and deprivation described in Gaza is consistent with grave breaches of the four Geneva Conventions. It concludes that these violations require urgent international accountability, independent investigation, and effective measures to protect civilians and prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian situation.

Keywords:

Gaza, war crimes, international humanitarian law, civilians, humanitarian aid, accountability.

Gaza is currently witnessing a severe escalation of armed conflict, accompanied by widespread violations of international humanitarian law, which constitute war crimes under international standards.

Definition of War Crimes

War crimes are serious breaches of the laws of armed conflict designed to protect civilians and persons not participating in hostilities. These include:

- The deliberate killing of civilians, including women and children.
- Indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks destroying civilian infrastructure such as hospitals, schools, and homes.
- The obstruction of humanitarian aid to civilian populations.
- Arbitrary arrests and torture occurring during the conflict.

International Evidence and Reports

Several international bodies have documented these violations in Gaza, including:

- Reports by the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) documenting repeated attacks targeting civilians and confirming breaches of international humanitarian law.
- Documentation from Human Rights Watch highlighting indiscriminate bombardments of civilian areas, amounting to war crimes.
- Amnesty International's warnings regarding the blockade of humanitarian aid and calls for accountability of responsible parties.

These actions violate the four Geneva Conventions, which safeguard civilians and civilian infrastructure during armed conflicts.

The Need for International Accountability

Given the severity of these violations, numerous international entities have called for independent investigations and prosecutions of those responsible.
The International Criminal Court (ICC) continues to monitor cases related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including crimes committed in Gaza.

Findings and Recommendations:

The article finds that the reported conduct in Gaza includes serious violations of international humanitarian law, particularly attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, obstruction of aid, and abuse during the conflict. It recommends independent investigations, prosecution of those responsible, and immediate international action to protect civilians and secure humanitarian access.

Conclusion

The situation in Gaza represents grave violations of international humanitarian law classified as war crimes, necessitating urgent international intervention to protect civilians, hold perpetrators accountable, and halt the escalating humanitarian crisis.

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